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ABSTRACT

Perceptions of social change in American society and education were examined via an attitude survey (22 demographic questions and 73 opinion statements) administered to the entire population of 5 Northern California rural high schools (n=1,288); all English classes in 2 Sacramento schools (n=1,384); and rural adults (n=258). Structured interviews were given to a cross section of students and adults (categories defined by the interviewers and selection made by school administrators). Among the items examined were: (1) Impact of Change (pace, quality, and pscyhological impact; traditional values; science and technology; family life); (2) City/Country Contrasts (freedom from serious social problems; the cautious approach; youth opportunities); (3) Change in American Education (pace; leadership; controversial issues; facilities; curriculum; teaching methods; lifelong learning). Results indicated: (1) the pace of change is perceived as damaging to traditional American values, particularly among rural adults; (2) there is widespread fear that city migrants and recreational or corporate developments will destroy rural life; (3) there is uncertainty and disagreement about the proper role of the schools in the future; (4) pride, resentment, uncertainty, anger, fear, and hope all seem to characterize rural attitudes about a changing society. (JC)

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"Perception of Change in Rural Communities"

by

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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A Research Project in Rural Education
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Without long deliberation we decided to settle on the shore of the little lake where both the natural beauty and the good soil promised us a pleasant home and where among oak, beech, and hickory trees, the evergreen pines, untouched by the axe, would always stand as a pleasant reminder of the pine forest of our old homeland.[1]

-- Gustaf Unonius, 1841
A Swedish pioneer in Wisconsin

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[1]David B. Greenberg, compiler and editor, Land That Our Fathers Plowed (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), p. 137.

The three or four decades that center on the turn of the century are popularly considered the heart and soul of the Good Old Days --- In truth, it was a highly complex period --- Life on the more isolated farms remained an endless routine of hard labor, loneliness, and continuous gambling with nature.

--- but what of the scene in America's small towns? Certainly, life there was not idyllic. There can be no doubt that the everyday routine of living was considerably more demanding in 1900 than is true of the 1970's. Illness and epidemics were distressingly common, medical care and public health services distressingly inadequate. For the working man, whether he clerked in the general store or labored in the carriage shop on the edge of town, hours were long, pay low, and benefits non-existent. His wife ran a household without machinery and conveniences now taken for granted, doing everything laboriously by hand --- narrowness, bigotry, dullness, and limited opportunity were common enough to push many a youth out into the wider world.

When all this is said, however, there remain certain appealing and enduring qualities about small-town living not easily forgotten --- friendliness --- kindness --- a simplicity and directness to life that has become exceedingly rare in this complex, faster-paced era.

It is probably true that figments of wishful thinking have embellished the Good Old Days; still, if they ever did exist, if they marked a time when tranquility, individuality, decency, and peace of mind were common currency of daily living --- then one place they were surely found was in the small towns of America seven or eight decades ago.[2]

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[2]Stephen W. Sears, Hometown U. S. A. (New York: American Heritage Pub. Co., Inc., 1975), pp. 8, 9.

Preface

Possibly no social characteristic is more complex than change. In one sense it may be claimed that no real change in human personality has occurred throughout history. Man's nature, always the same, has experienced no significant change in the long march of time. In another sense, whatever involves the dynamic of human experience, must necessarily change. All things human, even the most rigidly static human societies, must constantly change, simply because they are human. So in this vast continuum, from the seeming sameness of man's nature to the verity of the restless human condition, there is a profound difficulty in defining real change.

My first assumption is that social change is only partly a matter of real, if debatable, change. For it must be further assumed that social change is at least as much a matter of human perception as it is of actual change. How people perceive themselves and their relationships to others is of fundamental importance in understanding change in any society. Little actual change may have profound impact in a particular society, depending upon the structure of the society and the human perceptions which recognize and act upon the change.

This study is concerned with the perceptions of change in American society by those who live in a rural setting. Essentially it is limited to a study of five rural Northern California communities and two different areas of the city of Sacramento, California. Etna (population 667, 1970 U. S. census) was selected as a more isolated cattle ranching valley and Princeton (500), a similar community in size but located conveniently to major highways was selected for a concentration on rice-farming; Willows (4,085), only a short distance from Princeton and the county seat, is in the midst of a prosperous rice-farming region. Corning (3,573) is situated in a diverse agricultural area with olives and cattle and sheep ranching predominant. Finally, Williams (1,571) was included, a farming area primarily of grain crops.

For comparison, two areas of Sacramento (264,000) were included. The locale of John F. Kennedy High School involves a school district encompassing some of the most expensive new suburban homes in the city with some of the oldest, poorest, racial minority residential areas of the city. Bella Vista High School has a district including a large newer white suburban residential setting.

The study involved an attitude survey (see Appendix A) of 22 information questions (i.e. age - income - rural or urban setting) and 73 opinion statements. The survey was administered to the entire student populations of the five rural schools (all those in attendance on the particular day) and to all the English classes of the two urban schools. In addition, an adult version of the survey (see Appendix B) was sent home to all the homes of the students in three of the rural schools (Etna, Princeton, and Willows).

The next part of the study was a structured interview (see Appendix C) with a cross-section of students and adults (categories defined by the interviewer and selection made by school administrators). Interviews were conducted at Etna, Princeton, Willows, Williams, and J. F. Kennedy, Sacramento.

The survey and the interviews were divided into two basic sections: change in American society and, specifically, change in American education. The report follows this same format. The statistical treatment of the data was the use of a Chi-square test of significance within the rural and urban sub-groups, then the use of Chi-square as a test of significance between the rural and urban groups. A summary of the statistical results is provided in Appendix A and Appendix B.

The information obtained from the study is limited to the actual communities involved in the research. There is not direct attempt to apply the results of the study to the whole of rural America. The author does, however, indulge in frequent personal observation about the rural American scene and life in America

today; these observations are simply personal feelings from a life of appreciation for, reading and thinking about, the heritage of rural America. I believe the research is accurate; my opinions are, once set down, open to all kinds of criticism for the fallacies and the fancies I suspect they may very well contain.

I owe a very large debt of appreciation to the many people who so graciously aided me in this project. I would like to thank especially Mr. Ken Immer, Principal of Etna High School, Mr. Ernie Matlock, Principal of Willows High School, Mr. "Bud" Gott, Principal of Corning High School, Mr. Bill Drew, Superintendent of Williams Unified School District, Mr. M. E. Benedetti, Vice-Principal of John F. Kennedy High School, and Mrs. Lorraine Krueger, Chairman of the English Department of Bella Vista High School.

Also, I want to thank Dr. Homer Bronson, retired Chairman of the Department of Teacher Education, CSUC, for his professional encouragement as much as his personal friendship.

A final thanks to my wife for her typing, proof-reading and incredible patience.

TABLE I

Summary of Schools

School	School Grades	Date of Survey	Number Taking Survey Student-Adult
Etna High School, Etna, California 240 enrollment for 1974	9-12	Fall, 1973	191 - 97
Princeton High School Princeton, California 100 enrollment for 1974	9-12	Fall, 1973	90 - 32
Willows High School Willows, California 600 enrollment for 1974	9-12	Spring, 1974	430 - 129
Corning High School, Corning, California 600 enrollment for 1974	9-12	Spring, 1974	480
John F. Kennedy High School, Sacramento, California 1,900 enrollment in 1975	10-12	Spring, 1975	471
Bella Vista High School, Fair Oaks, California 2,185 enrollment for 1975	9-12	Spring, 1975	913
Williams High School, Williams, California 195 enrollment for 1975	9-12	Spring, 1975	87

Total:	rural adults	258
	rural students	1,288
	urban students	1,384
		2,930

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Introduction

A study concerned with perception of change in rural communities is confronted not only with the extremely complex problem of defining change, but of defining what is meant by "rural" in American life.

> The concept of rural America is widely used and understood, but in fact is not precise. It has different meanings when viewed philosophically, historically, and statistically. In general, the problems characteristic of rural Americans are found in the areas which lie outside of metropolitan centers---
>
> The rural population, as defined by the Bureau of the Census, includes persons living in the open country or in towns of less than 2,500 people. It is subdivided into the rural farm population which comprises all rural residents living on farms, and the rural nonfarm population which includes the remaining rural population. The urban population comprises all persons living in urbanized areas and in places of 2,500 or more outside of urbanized areas.[1]

Such a definition of "rural" is completely inadequate to the real rural setting of Northern California. While Etna, Princeton and Williams meet the Census Bureau definition of "rural" with populations of less than 2,500, Corning, Willows and many other towns in Northern California do not. Yet these communities are, by any relevant sociological measure, truly rural in composition. In the study 32 percent of the students at Willows High School and 40 percent of the students at Corning High School indicated that they live on farms of more than 10 acres; in Willows 11 percent indicated a farm size of more than 500 acres. Agriculture not only dominates the economy of these towns, farming and ranching as a way of life are fundamental influences in the life of the communities. For the purposes of this study I have chosen to

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[1]Economic Development Division: U. S. Department of Agriculture, The Economic and Social Condition of Rural America in the 1970's, Part I (Prepared for Committee on Government Operations, U. S. Senate, Ninety-Second Congress, 1971), p. XI.

include such communities, believing that they are actually rural in character and fully represent the outlook of rural people in Northern California.

The second major difficulty is, of course, a definition of change. I have chosen to limit the study to what rural youth and adults, as contrasted with urban youth, believe change to be. This is a study of human perceptions of reality rather than an attempt to measure real change.

Is such a study necessary? First, the problems confronting rural America, problems of poverty, housing, medical services, education, are among the most serious in the United States today. Second, is the tradition of neglect confronting rural areas in an increasingly urban society.

> Rural, furthermore, means an important segment of our nation's population - one third. It is a segment that is not decreasing in proportionate size, despite the alleged urbanization of our society. It is a segment that tends to be overlooked in these times of pre-occupation with urban crises.
>
> Although solving urban problems in our country should have top priority, the severity and magnitude of similar problems in the development of human resource and in the provision of basic services and facilities are no less important in rural areas. The importance is for rural living itself, not just because rural areas contribute so many undereducated, unskilled migrants to urban areas.
>
> Rural means people. It includes farmers, but it also includes men and women following every occupation known who choose to live beyond city limits in housing subdivisions, in towns, and in the open country. It means people with a strong desire for privacy, living space and self-reliance. It means people with a pride in home and family. It means people looking for opportunity who have left the

country for the city. Rural means America, our history and much of our dreams.

Thus, the rural distinction is important because it represents so much of what America has been as well as what it hopes to be. Rural means life at a scale that is comprehensible to the individual. It is most important that we preserve and strengthen this option.[2]

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[2]James A. Coop, The Meanings of Rural - A Third of Our Nation (U. S. Department of Agriculture: 1970 Yearbook of Agriculture), as quoted by Lewis R. Tamblyn in Rural Education in The United States (Washington, D.C.: Rural Education Association, 1971), p. 2.

I. CHANGE IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

A. Profile of Rural America

Population change from rural to urban status

The United States, for the first 150 years of its history a predominantly rural society, has emerged, in the last 50 years as one of the major urban societies of the world. "The principal characteristic of change in U.S. population since World War I has been urbanization."[1] "The most signifnificant and continuous, migration over the past two decades has been from rural to urban areas."[2]

Decline in the farm population, with a concomitant and dramatic rise in the urban population, has been the dominant change in American society. "Although the rural population has remained at about the same level, 54 million, for the past five decades, the farm population has become a steadily smaller proportion of it. Three-fifths of the rural population was composed of farm people in 1920; by 1970, the portion was only one-fifth."[3]

Concentration of serious social problems

In the United States today, contrary to widespread popular opinion, the worst social conditions prevail in the rural setting, not in the large cities of America. Rural people have been found to have "the highest percentage levels of poverty, the poorest housing, the most inadequate medical care, and the lowest levels of education."[4] Certainly the problem of poverty is of paramount concern. "Although the total number of persons in farm families

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[1]Economic Development Division: U.S. Department of Agriculture, The Economic and Social Condition of Rural America in the 1970's, Part I (Prepared for the Committee on Government Operations, U.S. Senate, Ninety-Second Congress, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), p.1.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Edward O. Moe and Lewis R. Tamblyn, Rural Schools as a Mechanism for Rural Development (Austin, Texas: National Educational Laboratory Publishers, Inc., 1974), p. 2.

below the poverty level is smaller than in nonfarm families, the percentage of persons in farm families in poverty remains about twice as high as nonfarm."[5]

Facts about American agriculture

1. In 1950, one farm worker supplied food for 16 people; in 1970 he supplied food for 45 people.[6]

2. From 1940 to 1964, the total number of farms in the United States declined from 6 to 3 million; in 1969 the average size of commercial farms (gross annual sales of $2,500 or more) was 554 acres.[7]

3. Agriculture is increasingly mechanized in the United States; since 1950 farm employment has dropped from 9.9 million to 4.6 million in 1969.[8] "This decline is due in part to high productivity rates in the farm sector, from increased use of mechanization and other labor-saving technology."[9]

4. "The hired farm working force of 1970 (2.5 million persons) was mostly white (78 percent), male (76 percent), and composed of nonfarm residents (73 percent). The workers were also predominantly young (median age, 33). They were overwhelmingly of non migratory status (92 percent)."[10]

Rural society in transition

As any society develops from traditional to modern, six major changes occur:

1. A more developed technology with a more complex division of labor.

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[5]The Economic and Social Condition of Rural America in the 1970's, op. cit., p. 46.

[6]Agricultural Extension Service: University of California, Facts About California Agriculture (University of California, 1970), p. II.

[7]The Economic and Social Condition of Rural America in the 1970's, op. cit., pp. 40, 42.

[8]Facts About California Agriculture, op cit., p. II.

[9]The Economic and Social Condition of Rural America in the 1970's, op. cit., p. 52.

[10]Ibid, p. 62.

2. Higher levels of literacy and education.
3. Cosmopolitan rather than localistic social relationships, with a breakdown of kinship relations and locality ties.
4. Less primary and more secondary social relationships.
5. A greater emphasis upon economic rationality.
6. An increase in empathy or open-mindedness toward new roles.

An application of these six steps in the development process to U. S. rural society leads to the following major alterations in rural society:

1. An increase in farm productivity per man has been accompanied by a decline in the number of farm people in the U. S.
2. Linkage of the farm with the nonfarm sector of American society is increasing.
3. Farm production is increasingly specialized.
4. Rural-urban differences in values are decreasing as America moves in the direction of a mass society.
5. Rural people are increasingly cosmopolitan in their social relationships due to improved mass communications, transportation, and the realignment of locality groups.
6. There is a trend toward a centralization of decision making in rural public policy and in agribusiness firms.
7. Changes in rural social organization are in the direction of a decline in the importance of primary relationships (such as in locality and kinship groups) and an increase in the importance of secondary relationships (such as in special interest formal organizations, government agencies, and business firms).[11]

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[11]Olaf F. Larson and Everett M. Rogers, "Rural Society in Transition: The American Setting," Chapter 2 from Our Changing Rural Society, James H. Copp, Editor (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Center for Agricultural and Economic Development, Iowa State University Press, 1964), p. 60.

B. Profile of Rural California

Distribution of state population

While 65 percent of the national population of more than 203 million is "metropolitan," with 35 percent "nonmetropolitan," in California, with a population of 20 million, 80 percent are "metro" and 20 percent are "nonmetro."[1]

When the first U. S. census was taken in California in 1850, there were 92,597 residents, of whom 57,861 were miners. Since 1860, the state's population has doubled every 20 years with but one exception. In 1860, the inhabitants numbered 380,000, of whom only one-fifth lived in towns or cities. Today, only about 2 percent of the population live on farms.[2]

Facts about California agriculture

1. "Of California's 100.2 million acres, 37 million are in farms. However, more than half of this farmland is open range, and less than one-third is cropland."[3]

2. In the late 1930's, farms in California averaged slightly more than 200 acres with an investment per farm of $16,000 in land and buildings. In 1969 the average farm size was 617 acres with a value of $327,250.[4]

3. "California, the number one farming state in the nation for 22 consecutive years, commercially produces about 250 crop and livestock commodities, excluding nursery crops, and provides the United States with about 25 percent of its table foods."[5]

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[1]Office of Regional and Community Development: U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, The Economic and Social Condition of Rural America in the 1970's, Part 2 (Prepared for the Committee on Government Operations, U. S. Senate, Ninety-Second Congress, Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1971), p. 78.

[2]Agricultural Extension Service: University of California, Facts About California Agriculture (University of California, 1970), p. 1.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid, p. 3.

[5]Ibid, p. 7.

C. Profile of Participants in Study

Distribution of students by age, sex, and grade

The age-grade distribution of students indicated generally twice as many in the ninth grade as in the twelfth grade. Many studies have been conducted and numerous explanations offered as to such a dramatic difference in numbers of entering and graduating students in the American high schools, but it would certainly seem plausible to assume that there continues to be a serious problem of students dropping out of school.

The distribution by sex indicated half of the students were male and half female.

TABLE II

Distribution of students by race

School	Race in Percent (less than 100% indicated no response)				
	Caucasian	Mexican-American	Black	Oriental	Indian
Etna	82%	5%	1%	1%	10%
Princeton	33	27	27	12	1
Willows	93	2	1	1	3
Corning	84	6	0	3	5
Williams	77	11	2	5	5
J. F. Kennedy	50	6	18	24	1
Bella Vista	91	4	0	2	2

Distribution of students by religion

The response to religious preference indicates an overwhelming preference for Catholic/Protestant. It is interesting to note, however, that nineteen percent of the youth indicated no religious identification of any kind.

Marital status of parents

Eighty-one percent of the students indicated their parents were married, 4 percent widowed, and fifteen percent separated or divorced.

Fathers of students in the study

Eighty-three percent of the fathers were living with their families, thirteen percent apart from their families, and 4 percent were deceased.

Such high numbers of students were unable to report family income accurately that the results are not regarded as valid. Apparently the financial status of the family is not widely shared with the children.

TABLE III

Educational Level of Father (as reported by students)

School	Did not complete high school	High school graduate	One, more years college	College graduate	Post-graduate
Etna	18%	39%	16%	16%	6%
Princeton	40	37	10	8	2
Willows	22	40	20	11	5
Corning	33	35	15	9	3
Williams	28	32	15	11	1
J. F. Kennedy	10	25	23	26	12
Bella Vista	13	28	23	21	10

The conclusion is that at least in the areas surveyed the educational level attained by the father is substantially lower in rural areas as opposed to suburban-urban areas.

Mothers of students in the study

Ninety-four percent of the mothers were living with their families (as compared to eight-three percent of the fathers), 4 percent were living apart from the families (compared to thirteen percent), and 1 percent were deceased.

The results of the income of mothers is not regarded as valid, since large numbers of students were unable to report.

TABLE IV

Educational Level of Mother (as reported by students)

School	Did not complete high school	High school graduate	One, more years college	College graduate	Post-graduate
Etna	14%	52%	18%	10%	3%
Princeton	29	42	14	9	4
Willows	16	52	16	10	3
Corning	23	47	17	9	3
Williams	30	37	11	8	5
J. F. Kennedy	6	37	27	21	5
Bella Vista	12	46	19	16	5

The conclusion is that, in the areas surveyed, the educational level of mothers in suburban-urban areas tends to be higher than in rural areas.

Family size

Rural students in the study come from significantly* larger families than do those youth in urban areas.

Number of brothers/sisters

	1-2	3-4	5-6	7 or more
rural	39%	35%	15%	11%
urban	51%	32%	12%	5%

*There was not a statistically significant difference within the rural-urban sub-groups but there was a significant difference between the groups.

Length of residence for students

Rural students, in the study, tend to have lived in the same area for a longer period than those in urban areas.

	One year or less	2-5	6-10	11-20	20 or more
rural	10%	20%	18%	51%	1%
urban	9	25	23	42	0

Place of residence

	Live in town	House in country	Live on farm
rural	48%	24%	28%
urban	88%	9%	3%

Size of farm

11-50 acres	51-100	101-500	500 or more
36%	14%	23%	27%

Every study of farm size in California and the United States indicates a long-term pattern of increase in size.

Anticipated level of education

	High school graduation	One, more years college	College graduation	Post-graduate	Business/ technical
rural	25%	29%	32%	7%	7%
urban	13%	25%	41%	15%	6%

These results suggest a higher level of education at least anticipated among urban youth than among rural youth.

D. The Impact of Change

The pace of social change

There is consistently strong agreement that not only is the United States rapidly changing but that the rate of change will be even greater in the future (23, 25). There is further agreement that while change is inevitable, the pace should probably be slower to allow people more time to adjust (28, 29). This ambivalence toward social change, that it is actually accelerating but should be slower, is especially strong among rural residents.

The quality of social change

A consistently definite belief, that American society is not a progressively better place in which to live, is combined with a serious question about the value of change (24, 26). There is a conviction that our society is not resolving its more serious social problems (38). This disenchantment with change as progress would seem to raise real questions both about perceptions of the value of change and the American sense of the future.

The psychological impact of change

Both rural and urban youth concur, with strong rural adult agreement, that the psychological implications of rapid social change in American life are negative. Feelings of confusion and uncertainty about changing social values and structures indicate problems of adjustment and direction (27, 30). Perhaps an unsettled condition is inevitable, even healthy, in a period of rapid change, but there is a feeling the psychological price may be too high. Uncertainty about the future, especially among the young, suggests a less stable sense of traditional patterns of behavior and purpose (61, 62). The divided, predominantly negative feelings about the future, the lack of optimism, the sense of personal confusion, indicate both youth and adults in this study feel overwhelmed by the onslaught of change (68, 69).

The rural perception of change is characterized by greater caution, a sense of inevitability, and, paradoxically, a more traditional optimism.

The rural sense of caution about anything new is not comparable to a contemporary urban sense of personal fear for safety. It is a spirit of realism that has learned, in a life with the land, the elements, and the uncertain power of nature, to approach decisions carefully and deliberately. But once the decision to accept or do something different is made, it is resolved with a willing acceptance of the consequences. Rural life accepts change more cautiously but with greater constancy than the urbanite does or possibly can.

There is, however, a rural mood of inevitability about change, a feeling that the profound changes occuring in American life are essentially urban in context. While the farmer recognizes and accepts the tremendous benefits of technology and while the rural community has enjoyed the advances of mass transportation, mass communication, and the innumerable gadgets of manufacture, there is a feeling that these changes are from the city, and that it is there, not the countryside, that our cultural future is to be decided. So there is a weakening of the old belief that individual integrity and courage, especially in the country, mean very much in the progress of America. There is still a fierce, and probably defensive conviction that individual resolve should matter, but there is a real and growing awareness that it actually doesn't. So the rural American waits for whatever is to come next, knowing the "farm vote" doesn't matter much anymore, and knowing, too, that urban life changes constantly with an ever wider net of influence and control.

Still, the optimism of the country is hard to vanquish. Somehow, even with a plethora of change, most of it bad, we will make it through, we will somehow manage. We always have, we always will. There is less tendency, even when discouraged, to give up. Perhaps, having fought the elements for so long, the rural American is less willing to capitulate to the enormous

forces of social change, no matter how overwhelming. The steady, self-reliant character, born of the soil, of the rural American has deep roots in a tradition of both courage and hope.

Traditional values

With strong rural adult agreement, rural youth agree, while urban youth in this study are divided, about the need to return to more traditional American values (31). Probably the older the person and the more rural the environment, the greater the resentment at rapidly changing values in American life.

Rural American life in the past has exemplified traditional Christian virtues. There simply cannot be any full appreciation for rural values apart from a recognition of the profound influence of Christianity. Broadly, there are two large dimensions to this heritage. First, is the tradition of determined and sacrificial courage. Rural men and women have been willing to give much, and to give up much for what they believe. Strength of character, determination for what they believe is right, a staunch morality, all exemplify the Christian virtue of courage. The desire has been, not for an ultimate luxury or leisure, but for sufficient prosperity to survive and build for the future, not of their own especially but for that of their children. Simple honesty, serious determination, the courage to face life, hardship, and the future without fear all imply the strength demanded by Christian tradition and the land.

The other, even more profound, Christian virtue is compassion. The individual must face life with courage but must, as well, express compassion to his fellows, knowing life is hard for most. So, kindness, quiet generosity, sympathy for the plight of those who suffer have also characterized the rural past. And one might hope that these simple virtues might not soon be lost.

Science and technology

Scientific discovery is viewed as the cause of most social change, at least among youth (32). The surprisingly divided opinion of rural adults may be interpreted both as a belief that change is much more extensive than simply the role of science in society and also that a historical cause-effect relationship between science and the modern technological state is not understood or accepted.

When the farmer began to mechanize his war against the ferocious odds of nature, the character of rural life began a long, irreversible process of change. Technology may have aided farming toward spectacular economic success; it has certainly changed the farmer. He is now mechanic, businessman, even social engineer; no longer are the best tools his hands and his wits. Impersonal mechanization, complex and interdependent social planner and participant, the modern farmer is more concerned about the American housewife and the price of tractors than he is with standing alone and with courage. There is a deep, restless bitterness among many farmers who sense that they too are now but a cog in a large social machine. The farmer is caught between Washington and the housewife, his decisions are increasingly made for him by professors, taxpayers and supermarket shoppers. So the old becomes quaint, and life on the farm becomes more and more like life anywhere else.

Family life

There is strong disagreement with the view that family life will be of little importance in the future (33). Apparently the widespread publicity of sexual freedom and the rise in divorce has done little to shake the view that the family, as the basic institution of society, will survive.

Leisure

The divided opinion of rural and urban youth, as opposed to the strong concurrence of rural adults, about the increase of leisure in the future suggests that the young are at least uncertain about the demise of work as central in American life (34). The strong response of rural adults may reflect a concern for the diminished place of the ethic of work. Such a perception would view with hostility the increase of leisure, at least for others, as the equivalent of a "lazy" society.

The traditional concept of disciplined effort, hard work, even struggle and hardship as an important value still dominates rural life. Sincere effort, determined effort, will ordinarily result in eventual success and happiness. Most of life, childhood, youth, the adult years, is preparation. A serious view of life means eventual reward. Any attempt to encourage children to simply enjoy childhood rather than to learn to work hard, to learn, to prepare, is viewed as soft, corrupt and damaging to the future of the child. Too much pleasantness, too much enjoyment or laughter probably means too much waste of time, lack of effort, and failure to build for the future. There is even a feeling that the harder, the tougher the experiences of childhood and youth the stronger and the better will be the man. It is a sober, even somber view of life. Hardship is not only not to be avoided, it is accepted as a worthy preparation for life. Most admired is the man who has faced hardship, survived, prospered and won. Easy living or easy riches are seen as a cheap success.

Individual meaning

In response to a question about the value of the individual in the future, almost half of the rural and urban youth in the study agree that individual meaning will decline (35). Such a perspective, of an increasingly impersonal society, would seem to be a threat to any real hope of personal meaning or fulfillment.

Any attempt to identify the character of traditional rural life must center on independence. The relative freedom from crowds and controls, noise, speed, and change; the freedom to succeed or to fail. Rural life has always implied a necessary courage to face the odds of nature, the opponents of heat and cold, rain and snow and drouth. Man against wilderness, man conquering nature has always meant a lonely struggle, a willingness to meet fierce odds and, competing, to win with courage or to lose with dignity. Individualism has always been the one great strand binding rural life into families, farms, churches, businesses, and communities. Each doing what is expected or, better, each doing what he expects of himself. Self-initiative, personal responsibility, hard work with a purpose, determination, an almost severe self-discipline--all these traits of rural character imply an admiration of strength or power. The softer virtues have ordinarily been a psychological luxury as man has set out to conquer the elements, the soil, even himself.

Government

Both the view that the size of government will increase and uncertainty, at least among youth, about the role of government in American society, suggest confusion about the American political process (36, 37). Rural adult hostility to "big government" probably should be expected but youthful uncertainty about the meaning of government in the future raises a problem about clear definition of democratic processes.

Youth and change

Rural youth and adults as well as urban youth strongly agree that the young are more receptive to change than are adults (59, 60). Paradoxically, there is very real uncertainty about the prospect for youth in the future (65, 66, 67). Rural adults believe the quality of life for the young will be significantly worse in the future. Rural as well as urban youth have little clear sense of a better future; it is perhaps well, then, that the young do see themselves as more capable of adjustment to change.

Rural youth are caught in a cruel dilemma: fast-paced, changing American society communicates, through its media, a reality which contradicts the placid, secure world of rural traditions. They always see, through the sociological magic of television, a youthful vision which makes their local world seem conventional and dull. Even the problems and lurid tragedies of urban life project, if suffering and uncertainty, as well excitement and power and success. They look from a rural world of tradition, of the stability of words and the even greater stability of personality, to the colorful chaos of the urban psyche. It is hard, especially for the young, to resist the siren call of change, a change which seems to have forever abandoned the small towns and distant farms of the past. It is the city; it is the urban masses where contemporary life really happens. As often as the media communicate any images of rural life it is a life which is in the past, it is quiet, even somber, it is a life of romantic tranquility. For rural youth the placidity of the small town and farm may be better but it is difficult not to believe that the risks and uncertainty, the multi-hued dimensions of dress and speech and activities are not more exciting. For most rural youth there is not an open rebellion to the moods of tradition which encompass their lives, but a quiet yearning, a subtle restlessness which is growing: there is an anticipation of change which is ominous to the survival of a distinctive rural culture.

Social institutions

Finally, there is substantial uncertainty that the institutions of American society are viable or able, any longer, to cope with social change (70).

You love the land - to plant things and see it grow, and you enjoy the hard work that goes with it. That's farming. I think any farmer loves the land. I don't think you'd ever make a good farmer unless you really enjoyed doing it or working with it. I don't think I'd care to do anything else.[1]

-- Bill Hammer, Sr.
an Illinois farmer

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[1]Archie Lieberman, Farm Boy (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Pub., 1974), p. 30.

E. The City and the Country: A Contrast

Freedom from serious social problems

All involved in the study, urban as well as rural participants, strongly agree that a small town simply has fewer serious problems than a large city (39). However, recent social statistics indicate a rapid rise in crime as well as other problems in rural areas which, proportionately, are at least as serious as urban problems. It can be speculated that there is a traditional rural tendency to mask many problems while, paradoxically, exaggerating others. In a small rural community an infrequent murder is likely to be far bigger news than in a large city but racial prejudice ordinarily would be more subtle, less visible but just as real as in an urban setting.

A more conservative approach to change

There is strong agreement that a cautious, more conservative approach to change prevails in rural areas (40, 41). The larger issue is rural hostility to change. Generally, through numerous interviews with rural youth and adults, the conclusion is that the rural mood is more that of caution than hostility. The fear of rural Americans is directed more at urban life than at change as such. The attitude is that change in American life is too urban in its orientation and that such change is therefore generally bad.

The rural life of even pre-1940's has largely disappeared. Corporate farming, with even the family farm now big business, has replaced the family farm of the past. The mass media, chain stores, the automobile all have competed against the localism of the rural past. And yet with the massive invasion of contemporary urban life into rural America now largely accomplished, there remains a strong, even growing perspective of rural life and tradition which seems to deny the changes which have and are occurring. It is as though, to preserve the rural enterprise of

yesterday, that there is a deliberate denial that that enterprise is more than threatened. There is the determined perception, almost self-deception, that nothing important has really changed. So there is a defensive mood, a determined resistance to change, and a belief that rural life is still distinctive, better, and lasting, if only the city of mass media can be held off. To pretend nothing important has really changed may make it so a little longer, but rural life is fundamentally different from its traditions and is increasingly caught up in the stream of a pervasive urban culture. The rural past is past and neither the defensive determination to preserve it from within nor urban nostalgia about its power as a meaningful alternative will bring it back.

A better way of life

There is consistently strong agreement that people in small towns are more open and friendly than people in large cities (42). Further there is the perception, both by rural and urban participants in the study, that rural life is slower, more calm and peaceful than urban life (49). Even urban youth tend to agree with rural youth that independence and self-reliance are more valued in rural areas (50). Finally, rural people are perceived to be more direct and honest than city people (51).

Obviously, there is the issue of whether these characteristics, of simplicity, honesty, calmness, and independence, continue to be significant values in a contemporary urban society. To the extent that a slower, more peaceful way of life is a viable alternative in American society, the overwhelming conclusion is that rural life best affords the opportunity for such a choice.

Less opportunity for youth

In response to the statement that large cities have more activities for youth than do small towns, it is interesting to note that rural adults most strongly agree but less than half of the urban youth in the study concur (43). The frequent observation in the interviews of rural youth that there is simply less to do in a small town was generally contradicted by urban youth who said they would enjoy rural outdoor activities. It seems truly

unfortunate that both groups have so little opportunity to experience, at least occasionally, the other environment.

A way of life which is improving

Overwhelmingly, rural adults agree that the quality of rural life is improving (44). But rural and urban youth are far less certain. It is possible rural adults are more inclined to view progress in historical terms, remembering how hard rural life often was in the past. In contrast, youth may be more inclined to view the present in terms of an anticipated future and to be far more skeptical that progress is inevitable.

An alternative way of life

There is general agreement that rural communities are not too isolated from the mainstream of American culture (45). There is agreement among rural youth and adults that their communities are not changing as rapidly as urban America. A majority of urban youth, however, believe their communities are changing at the same tempo as the rest of the society (46). Further, rural youth and adults concur that their communities are not being swallowed up in the sameness of social conformity, but continue to be relatively different from urban society (47). These perceptions suggest a rural way of life which continues to be a genuine alternative to an urbanized society, an alternative affording social distance and independence.

With those who prefer the city, or at least cannot escape from it, and those who are truly rural in their life and residence, there is a growing number of Americans who seek the best of both; "suburbanite" living at the fringes of the city is a development in American culture reflecting the need for greater space and greater freedom.

An attractive way of life but a threatening attraction

Most concur that large numbers of city people would prefer the alternative of rural life (48). There is a fear that rural communities are threatened by an onslaught of tourists and urban

expatriates (53). Also, large recreational developments are viewed as yet another threat to rural tranquility (54). So the very attraction of a rural alternative is perceived as a real threat to its survival. One of the most significant challenges to the future of American society will be to make possible to many more Americans the way of life rural society implies but not, at the same time, to crush that alternative under a burden of numbers.

Rural areas can attempt to develop an alternative style of work and living to the urban American scene. Less hectic, more quiet, rural life can be a renewing experience for the urban expatriate. Many in the future will seek out the small town as a better, more wholesome place to live and "raise a family." But they will not, nor should they try, to escape responsibility for urban America and international involvement.

Not only will the country be an alternative place to live, <u>for a few</u>, it will emerge as the sphere of leisure activity for the many. As resources, especially fossil fuels, become increasingly scarce, shorter trips, closer locations will be increasingly sought out. The "countryside" must be seen as among the most valuable resources of our industrialized society. A few cannot possess most of the land; quiet, clear skies, and the serenity of the land are the right of all.

Rural communities will experience profound tension and change as they gradually and grudgingly recognize they are an integral part, a responsible resource of the whole of our technological society. Everyone has a right to the country. No one can escape urban responsibility by flight. "A house divided" is a perspective rural Americans have yet to face.

An even more pervasive social responsibility of rural America is the implied alternative it offers to our urban culture. Do we remain convinced that the technological direction we have chosen is still the best or even a viable choice? Are we willing to face the alternative implied in rural life? A drastic reduction

of national power and international supremacy, a quest for serenity, a disciplined yet not authoritarian social structure - this is probably not an appealing alternative to a city-dwelling society that would be glad for quiet but not at the price that rural life traditionally has demanded. We are probably too committed to our technological, urban, affluent, and powerful status to reject it in order to save either the environment or ourselves.

So rural America is faced with a future more and more absorbed by the dominance of urban patterns and as a "recreational" resource for the whole.

Science and the family farm

Larger, corporate farming in the future is seen as one result of scientific technology applied to agriculture (56). While there is overwhelming concurrence that science has been a great boon to the American farmer, there is a belief that the family farm will gradually disappear (57, 58). Whether the demise of the family farm is viewed as an unfortunate by-product of technology or the result of a corporate outlook by those families who have survived as farmers in a corporate society, the only ones who seem to express much regret are the city dwellers yearning for "a garden and a cow." It is possible, if there is ever to be a renaissance of family farming in corporate America that it will come from those who have fled the city, not from the vast businesses that are less farms than corporations.

Preference for the country

Perhaps nostalgic, even wistful, is the overwhelming preference for rural life, not only by rural adults and youth, but by most of the urban youth who participated in the study (64). Even for the contemporary, sophisticated urban American there would still seem to be a need for roots, for a meaning not easily found in an environment cut off from the earth and things which grow.

There is an American vitality that has been largely rural in our national past. That cultural dynamic has been largely dissipated, so that contemporary American life is uncertain and troubled.

A "pluralistic" society is a society in transition: there is no historical antecedent for the assumption that a pluralistic society is not a divided and temporary society. An explosion of urban culture has doomed the traditions of rural life in America. Stability, individuality, and a large personal freedom are no longer possible in an interdependent, technological society. While it is admirable to recognize and respect what has been lost, it will do little good to attempt to impose on modern America what is past. What was once freely accepted could now only be harshly imposed. It is a useless struggle. A new vision, a new dynamic may emerge which will bring myth and meaning to urban America but the ways of the country and the small town are gone, forever.

> Never has there been such a dramatic human movement as the one that settled America. There was no barrier -- not fear nor mountains, nor forests, nor emptiness -- The world has never known such courage, such creativity, and finally such abundance. Certainly, it was the people who did it. But just as certainly it was this land that made it possible ----
>
> Those wonderful simplicities are not lost, just buried. Time and events may uncover them --
>
> My feeling is that we teeter now on the brink. We can rescue ourselves and begin to heal our land, our nation. Or we can plunge on carelessly consuming ourselves into oblivion --
>
> Now the challenge is not to win a land or enlarge it, but to preserve it.[1]

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[1]Hugh Sidey, "Our Country and the Search for Community," Today's Education, 65:1, January, February, 1976, pp. 18-21.

II. CHANGE IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

The pace of change in education

While both rural and urban youth tend to agree that the public schools are changing too slowly, rural adults disagree (71). Yet most, youth and adults, concur that schools will be radically different in the future (72). Further, there is consistent disagreement with the view that contemporary education is basically unchanged from that of the parents in the study (73). While youth are divided on the question of whether schools resist change, rural adults disagree (74). These responses suggest, among both rural and urban youth, a probably traditional impatience with the tempo of change in education. But it is interesting to note that they perceive their educational experience as different from that of their parents and, further, that they anticipate major change in the future. Rural adult responses indicate, not surprisingly, a probably growing fear that the schools are already too much a vehicle, even an instigator, of social as well as educational change.

Leadership in change

While the youth in the study tend to agree that the schools should be even more involved in social change, rural adults are evenly divided in their opinions (75). There is strong agreement among all participants in the study (ninety-five percent of the rural adults agreed), however, that the public schools continue to be a very important part of American life (77). It would seem that rural adults strongly support public schools as a traditional institution in American society even while expressing concern, even hostility, over its nature and content. Of course, rural adults disagreed as strongly as youth agreed that students should have a greater voice in running the schools (80). So there is apparently still a feeling that the schools should remain a strong and viable part of American life but real confusion over what should be the role of the schools in society.

Preparation of youth for change

Youth in the study are evenly divided and rural adults disagree that the schools are effectively preparing the young for a rapidly changing world (78). There is moderate agreement among students, but definite adult disagreement, that the schools are offering adequate vocational preparation (79). However, there is consistent agreement that adults tend to value education more than youth (81). Finally, there is consistent and strong agreement that the schools should concentrate on preparing youth to cope with change (99). This suggests a view that formal education will continue to be important as a vehicle for learning to adjust to and cope with American society in the future.

Education in values

While rural adults strongly concur in the need to emphasize moral and ethical instruction, youth are uncertain in their responses (82).

Controversial issues

A majority of participants in the study agree that the schools should encourage more discussion of controversial issues (83). Whether this spirit of openness to inquiry would long survive in an atmosphere of strong local tensions over a social concern or in an attempt to implement debate with action, is seriously open to question, however.

Change in school facilities

There is widespread support for the view that rural schools generally have less equipment and facilities than large city schools (85). However, a majority believe students will spend less time in a formal classroom setting in the future (93), perhaps alleviating the need for such massive expenditures on public school facilities. Supporting this view is the opinion expressed by youth in the study (rural adults disagree) that students should be more involved in the community and less in the classroom (98).

Change in curriculum

While students tend to disagree, rural adults support the view that schools should have harder academic standards (86). Such a view probably reflects a gradually emerging national consensus about education, a consensus that is essentially conservative. The public mood seems to support a greater emphasis on basics, more rigorous standards of achievement, and a sterner measure of discipline. Needless to say, a whole current generation of educators will probably disagree, but attempt, if grudgingly, to implement the public will.

An obvious contradiction is the popular view that schools should offer many new and different subjects (90). This paradox of a stern academic rigor as against the interests of students and the relevance of subjects, will almost certainly result in even further educational confusion. Reflecting this academic confusion is the divided opinion, reflected both by youth and adults, as to whether the current curriculum is relevant to the future (91). Youth, however, agree far more than rural adults that the curriculum should emphasize the future rather than the past (95). While it could be suggested that the future is synonymous with uncertainty and therefore properly the province of the young, the more serious issue is the obvious fear of many adults that, with the demise of the past, at least as a heritage of social consciousness, there may be no future worth learning about.

It is entirely possible that the schools are asked too much: to conserve our traditions against a youthful perspective increasingly hostile to the past, but also to cope -- having only the seemingly meagre tools of our heritage, language, the arts and the sciences, history -- with a future rapidly overwhelming us.

I would venture the personal opinion that the schools, as tempting as the siren call of "futurism" may be (and, of course, the miriad attendants of "relevance," "individualized" instruction, and the other paraphernalia of philosophical uncertainty), are faced with the real challenge of a continuing to do what, alone,

the school traditionally has done reasonably well. To impose the past, lovingly if possible but to impose it nonetheless, is the one function education has ever been able to carry out with any merit. To change society, to prepare for the future is the heady stuff of dreams and political oratory but not a particularly substantial basis for a public school curriculum. Now it can certainly be argued that the tools given us by our heritage, essentially the tools of rational discourse and compassionate belief, are too tenuous to cope with the furies of our future, but they are the only real tools we have. If our schools spend very much more time debating their meaning rather than fulfilling their possibly narrow but hopefully functional work of teaching history (in the fullest sense), then educators may have less to fear from a confused and angry electorate than from a future beyond the control of civilized processes.

Change in teaching methods

Rural adults disagree that teachers continue to utilize the same teaching methods they have in the past (87). In attempting to speculate about future methods of teaching there is real uncertainty (88, 89), but there is general agreement that media instruction will be far more important (92). Such results probably indicate less that adults are sensitive to changes in methods than that they continue to suspect a relationship between perceived social upheaval in American society and the activities of teachers in the classroom. The schools are somehow felt to be a major cause of social turmoil.

The point made by Marshall McLuhan is apt in relation to the attitudes of rural adults toward the schools: he studies changes which he doesn't necessarily like. Community support for the schools is more for what they have been, not necessarily for what they are becoming.

A final point in relation to methods of teaching: the substitution of epistemology for metaphysics has benefited philosophy about as much as the substitution of process for meaning and purpose in American public education. How teachers teach is still a subservient concern to what they teach and why. Whether teachers in the future use books or films or "brand X" (yet to be developed by some School of Education), is probably less important than the crisis of meaning which already pervades the educational establishment.

Lifelong learning

A majority of rural adults concur that adult education will be more significant in the future (94).

School as an enjoyable experience

Do most teachers understand and enjoy young people? Rural students and parents thought so but urban youth were divided in opinion (96). Again, when asked whether school is an enjoyable experience for students, rural participants agreed it was but urban youth were almost evenly divided (97). Whatever greater personal meaning and fulfillment rural youth find in school is possibly reflected in the strong urban feeling that the individual student should receive more attention in the future (100).

Conclusion

Research conclusions

1. While there is agreement that the United States is a rapidly changing culture, there is a genuine fear that social change is too rapid, that the pace of change is damaging to American life. Especially among rural adults there is a strong feeling that traditional values, the beliefs which sustain life, are being lost.

2. There is the belief that rural life is more tranquil, more open and honest, and more friendly and caring than urban America. But there is a widespread fear that city migrants, large recreational developments, and corporate agribusiness will invade and destroy traditional rural life.

3. While there is strong agreement that the schools are a vital part of American life there is obvious uncertainty and disagreement about the proper role of the schools in the future. That schools, as all of American society, will radically change seems widely accepted but there is little agreement as to the direction and content of change.

In sum, the rural communities surveyed express pride in the traditions of rural life but there is a strong perception that these values are seriously threatened in a rapidly changing urban culture. Pride and resentment, uncertainty and anger, fear and hope all seem characteristic of rural attitudes about a changing society.

A personal conclusion

There is a current nostalgia for the alternative of a "rural" way of life: there is both a concern for the many harsh realities of urban life and a renewed nostalgia for the many myths of our American rural past. There is a feeling, in the midst of difficult times, that we have lost something.

There is a new awareness of the very real problems as well as the genuine prospects of rural America: our society contains no greater poverty or illiteracy, no worse health problems or more outmoded social structures than in rural America; but nowhere else does our society contain greater social stability or more personal meaning and opportunity for social involvement than "in the country."

The rural alternative of work and life should gradually emerge, in the coming decade, as a limited but increasingly clear and important choice. We are inevitably technological and urban as a culture. There cannot be, nor should there be, a turning back to the "good old days." They never really existed other than in the myths of our deceptive memories. But there can be, indeed must be, alternative patterns of fulfillment - not escape from our problems but of alternative ways to a responsible life, whether city, suburbs, or country.

The pluralistic, transitional nature of American culture suggests that there is no return to the simpler, less hectic life of our rural past. But our fluid social condition also implies a culture not only changing but in movement toward an as yet unclear "post-modern" condition. The new stability will be very different from our rural past but such a future <u>can be</u> deeply influenced by its rural heritage. I believe our rural tradition presents a way of life which was at once more free and more fulfilling than the contemporary urban sprawl. But that past indicates the possibility of an urban renaissance in which the man of the city could become as well the man of sky and earth and freedom. I think there is little possibility, at least from my perception of history, for such a renewed future, but there is a possibility. There could be a renaissance of rural meaning in the midst of our inevitable urban future. If there could still be, in 2000 A.D., a place to grow flowers, a sky which is blue, and men who can still dream, our past will not be irrevocably wasted or lost.

The rain begins to fall and the earth, parched, weary, is refreshed. The rolling, tumbling grey clouds blot out the blue sky. There is a mood of rest and of turmoil past. So the farmer stands, gazing at the large drops falling on the fallow fields. Harvest ended, it is time now to rest. Before a roaring fire to dream, to plan, to hope. New plantings, yet harder work, sweat and a cool drink of water, all lie ahead. But for now, rest. He knows, beyond knowledge, that endings need not be forelorn. Grey and storms, winter wind and raging sky do not forever hide spring and birth and life. For the urban dweller who forever works inside the walls of a factory or an office, who watches, within yet more walls of his home, from a box, pictures of distant realities, it may be too late. Too late to dream, to work for the loving of work, to be a man. But we must, in the face of our rural roots, rage against despair, we can plant a seed, walk through the grass before we spend our time forever mowing it. We can try, however difficult, the large work of harnessing our technological, bureaucratic momentum. We can cry out for human meaning in the midst of our vast institutions. And if all else fails, we can, each of us alone, demand of ourselves that we serve our real humanness without fear.

Then the land may yet flourish again.

Postscript

Recently I had the opportunity to visit the once small rural community in Colorado where I completed high school years ago. Today, a town once many miles from Denver, it has been swallowed up by the city. Now, nothing more than a huge suburb, the city reaches to the very edges of what was once my parent's farm.

I remember, while in high school, the excitement and pride we all felt when the community, mostly of retired farmers, reached a population of 2,500 and qualified for the status of "town." I remember 4-H and FFA, the annual Fall "Harvest Festival," the big social, agricultural event of the year. I remember "Smitty" the Police Chief (with a force of three men, including himself) warning us about driving too fast - the worst crime in town. Of course, there was the Senior Prom and high school teachers (some good, some bad, some new, some old) who were among the nicest, if strictest people I have ever known.

There was no television and the movie house was only open on weekends. It got cold, awful cold in the winter, especially with outdoor plumbing. Hay was pitched with a fork, the family cow was milked by hand, and chores were a tiresome but necessary burden. We worked with our hands mostly and sweat was never a surprise. I still remember, now over 25 years later, the last team of mules I would ever see, cutting the hay on my folk's place.

One year the well went dry, my senior year in high school, and we were too poor to drill a new well. So, for a year we hauled water and took a bath in a tub in the kitchen. That was my bath, a good one too, for the Senior Prom.

Then my brother went into the Navy and I went away to college. We dreamed, both of us, of returning some day to the farm. It was going to be a herd of polled Herefords and a good life farming together.

We never returned.

Now my parents are buried in a cemetery looking out over the fields they loved to the Rockies. The last time I was there it was winter and there were no leaves on the trees. It was quiet, almost solemn and the sky was blue, unusual for Denver these days.

While there are still the memories of those days when the family and the farm went together, it is over now, past into a heritage few seem to have time to remember anymore.

I believe those times are worth remembering if only to remind us of what we once were and dreamed we might be.

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APPENDIX A:

Student Survey

with

Summary of Results

Attitude Survey
(Student Form)

This survey is intended to compare the attitudes of rural youth with those of rural adults about change in American society and education. It is not a survey of change as such but is rather a survey of your feelings and attitudes about change.

The following statements have no "right", or "wrong" responses. The survey is intended to obtain your personal opinion. Your response will be anonymous and your full and thoughtful responses will be appreciated.

Please write only on the response sheet by marking each response firmly with the pencil you have been provided. Please do not write on the survey instrument since it will be used again. You may erase, completely, and mark a different response. Thank you.

1. Age: (A.) 13-15 (B.) 16 (C.) 17 (D.) 18 (E.) 19 and older
2. Sex: (A.) Male (B.) Female
3. Grade: (A.) 9 (B.) 10 (C.) 11 (D.) 12
4. Race: (A.) Caucasian (B.) Mexican-American (C.) Black (D.) Oriental (E.) Indian
5. Religion: (A.) Catholic (B.) Protestant (C.) Jewish (D.) other (E.) none
6. Parents: Marital Status (A.) Married (B.) Widowed (C.) Separated or divorced
7. Father: (A.) Living with family (B.) Living apart from family (C.) Deceased
8. Father: Age (A.) 30-39 (B.) 40-49 (C.) 50-59 (D.) 60-69 (E.) 70 and older
9. Father: Occupation (Write in the occupation after "Institution" at top of response sheet.)
10. Father: Annual Income (A.) Less than 10,000 (B.) 10,000-15,000 (C.) 15,000-20,000 (D.) 20,000-30,000 (E.) More than 30,000
11. Father: Level of Education (A.) Did not complete high school (B.) High school graduate (C.) One or more years of college (D.) College graduate (E.) Post-graduate work
12. Mother: (A.) Living with family (B.) Living apart from family (C.) Deceased
13. Mother: Age (A.) 30-39 (B.) 40-49 (C.) 50-59 (D.) 60-69 (E.) 70 and older
14. Mother: Occupation (Write in the occupation after "Course" at top of response sheet.)
15. Mother: Annual Income (A.) Less than 5,000 (B.) 5,000-10,000 (C.) 10,000-15,000 (D.) 15,000-20,000 (E.) More than 20,000
16. Mother: Level of Education (A.) Did not complete high school (B.) High school graduate (C.) One or more years of college (D.) College graduate (E.) Post-graduate work
17. Number of brothers/sisters: (A.) 1-2 (B.) 3-4 (C.) 5-6 (D.) 7 or more
18. My length of time in present community: (A.) one year or less (B.) 2-5 years (C.) 6-10 years (D.) 11-20 years (E.) more than 20 years
19. Home: (A.) Town (B.) Farm (C.) House in country
20. Size of farm in acres (A.) Less than 10 acres (B.) 11-50 (C.) 51-100 (D.) 101-500 (E.) Over 500 acres
21. Your anticipated future occupation (Write in the occupation after "Date" at top of response sheet.)
22. Level of education you intend to complete: (A.) High school graduation (B.) One or more years of college (C.) College graduation (D.) Post-graduate work (E.) Business/technical school

Check (on the response sheet)	Strongly Agree A	Agree B	No Opinion C	Disagree D	Strongly Disagree E

Society and Change

23. The United States is one of the most rapidly changing nations in the world.
24. The United States is progressively becoming a better place in which to live.
25. The United States will change even more rapidly in the future.
26. Most social changes are good and social change should be constant.
27. Rapid social change is emotionally upsetting to people.
28. Change is inevitable: nothing can be done to stop it.
29. Change should be slower so people could have time to adjust.
30. The United States is changing too rapidly; people are unsettled and confused.
31. The United States should return to its traditional values.
32. Most change today is the result of scientific discovery.
33. Family life will be of little importance in the future.
34. In the future less time will be spent at a job; there will be more leisure time.
35. The individual will be of less value in the future.
36. Government in the United States will get constantly larger in the future.
37. People expect too much from government; there is too little personal responsibility.
38. Most of our serious social problems are gradually being solved.
39. There are fewer serious problems in a small town than in a large city.
40. A large city changes more readily than a small town.
41. People in a small town are more conservative, less likely to change than people in a large city.
42. People in small towns are more open and friendly than people in large cities.
43. A large city has more activities for young people than a small town.
44. The quality of rural life in the United States is improving.
45. Rural communities are too isolated from the rest of American life.
46. My own town is changing as rapidly as the rest of the United States.
47. My own town is becoming more and more like every other city in America.
48. Large numbers of city people would like to move to a small town.
49. Rural life is slower, more calm and peaceful than urban life.
50. Rural people put greater value on independence and self-reliance than people in cities.
51. Rural people tend to be more direct and honest than city people.
52. City people are too mobile; they move around too much.
53. Rural towns are in danger from too many tourists and city people moving in.
54. Large recreational developments are ruining many rural areas.
55. Old people are more respected and appreciated in a rural community than they are in urban areas.
56. Technology means larger, corporate farms in the future.
57. Science has been a great benefit to American farming.
58. The "family farm" will gradually disappear in the United States.
59. Young people are more receptive to change than adults.
60. Rural youth are changing more rapidly than rural adults.
61. I have "mixed" feelings about what change means for my life.
62. I am very uncertain about what America will be like in the future.
63. In the future people will travel more and further than in the past.

64. I would prefer living in a large city.
65. Youth will have more opportunity in the future for lasting friendships than their parents.
66. Youth will probably enjoy life more than most adults today.
67. Youth will have more control over their future than their parents have had.
68. I am excited about the future: the prospects are much greater than the problems.
69. In a period of rapid social change there is increasing confusion about self-identity. (Who am I?).
70. Social institutions (e.g. schools, churches, family) are increasingly unable to cope with change.

Education and Change

71. The public schools are changing too slowly.
72. The schools of the future will be radically different.
73. The education of youth today is basically unchanged from that of their parents.
74. The public schools seem to strongly resist change.
75. The schools should provide greater leadership in changing our society.
76. The schools don't seem able to cope with the social problems in America.
77. The public schools are a very important part of American life.
78. The public schools are effectively preparing youth for a rapidly changing world.
79. The schools are preparing youth effectively for the jobs they want.
80. Students should have a greater voice in running the schools.
81. Adults think education is more valuable than young people do.
82. The schools should emphasize moral and ethical instruction.
83. Schools should permit more debate on controversial issues.
84. Students have more freedom in a large city school than in a rural school.
85. Rural schools generally have less facilities and equipment than large city schools.
86. Schools should have much harder academic standards.
87. Teachers continue to use the same teaching methods they always have.
88. In the schools of the future textbooks will no longer be used.
89. Most learning in the future will be by computer instruction.
90. Schools should offer many new and different subjects.
91. The subjects taught in school are relevant to the future of modern youth.
92. Media instruction (e.g. TV, film) will be much more important in the future.
93. Students in the future will spend much less time in formal classrooms.
94. In the future people will go to school longer and will continue to learn as adults.
95. Schools should emphasize the future rather than spend so much time on the past.
96. Most teachers understand and enjoy young people.
97. School is an enjoyable experience for most students.
98. Students should be more involved in community activities and less in the classroom.
99. Schools should concentrate on preparing students to cope with change.
100. In the future more attention should be given to the individual student.

ATTITUDE SURVEY: PERCENTAGES OF STUDENT RESPONSES

Strongly Agree / Strongly Disagree
+Agree +Disagree

S=Significant Difference
R,U=Significant Difference in Rural, Urban Sub-Group
NS=No Significant Difference

Question	Rural		Urban		Difference		Summary
23	82% /	4%	80% /	7%		R	Strongly Agree
24	21	54	22	51	NS		Disagree
25	74	6	72	5	NS		Strongly Agree
26	26	25	29	22	NS		Uncertain, divided opinion
27	49	13	47	14	NS		Agree
28	54	26	54	26	NS		Agree
29	59	14	52	18	S		Agree, rural-stronger agreement
30	48	25	41	26	S		Agree, rural-stronger agreement
31	38	26	31	32	S		Divided opinion, rural-stronger
32	54	21	57	18	NS		Agree agreement
33	24	60	20	61	S		Disagree, urban-stronger disagreement
34	37	37	34	36	NS		Divided opinion
35	44	28	42	31	NS		Agree
36	39	15	42	12	NS		Agree
37	36	35	36	32	NS		Divided opinion
38	26	46	26	46		R	Disagree
39	71	19	61	18		R	Agree
40	72	13	64	14		U	Agree
41	72	14	67	13	S		Strongly Agree, rural-stronger
42	76	11	60	15		U	Agree agreement
43	62	24	49	26		U	Agree
44	38	20	32	18		R	Uncertain
45	15	54	15	46		U	Disagree
46	18	60	50	19	S		Rural disagree, urban agree
47	22	54	50	17		U	Rural disagree, urban agree
48	67	9	54	10		R,U	Agree
49	70	9	64	9		R	Agree
50	54	14	46	14	S		Agree, rural-stronger agreement
51	55	17	40	19	S		Agree, rural-stronger agreement
52	40	21	37	24	S		Agree, rural-stronger agreement
53	46	28	42	23		R,U	Agree
54	40	33	38	32		R	Divided opinion
55	65	11	53	14	S		Agree, rural-stronger agreement
56	40	13	41	11	NS		Agree
57	75	7	74	7	NS		Strongly Agree
58	44	34	46	25		R	Agree
59	72	8	73	9		U	Strongly Agree
60	68	8	62	7	S		Agree, rural-stronger agreement
61	51	13	52	14	NS		Agree
62	60	20	56	22		R	Agree
63	46	26	53	18		R	Agree
64	13	77	20	65		U	Strongly disagree
65	23	35	25	32	NS		Uncertain, divided opinion

Question	Rural		Urban		Difference		Summary
66	36%	33%	37%	28%	S		Divided opinion
67	41	28	45	23	S		Agree, urban-stronger agreement
68	29	37	28	37		R	Divided opinion
69	47	20	47	19	NS		Agree
70	34	29	35	27	NS		Divided opinion
71	46	29	27	26		R	Agree
72	58	12	53	14	NS		Agree
73	29	57	24	63	S		Disagree, urban-stronger disagreement
74	40	27	33	30		R	Divided opinion
75	45	16	45	13		R	Agree
76	37	25	38	23	NS		Divided opinion
77	76	9	73	9		R	Strongly agree
78	35	34	33	37		R	Divided opinion
79	43	35	45	33	NS		Agree but opinion divided
80	63	16	65	12		R	Agree
81	67	17	67	18		U	Agree
82	38	16	38	16	NS		Uncertain
83	58	8	59	7	NS		Agree
84	41	35	28	34		R	Divided opinion
85	69	15	55	16		U	Agree
86	21	39	27	41		R	Disagree
87	47	34	38	37		R,U	Agree, urban-divided opinion
88	33	27	32	26		R	Uncertain, divided opinion
89	42	20	38	20		R	Agree
90	82	6	82	5	NS		Strongly agree
91	38	26	36	25	S		Divided opinion
92	53	15	54	11	NS		Agree
93	49	17	52	12	S		Agree, urban-stronger agreement
94	32	31	28	27		R	Uncertain, divided opinion
95	62	15	61	16	NS		Agree
96	43	33	38	32	S		Agree but divided, rural stronger agreement
97	49	27	40	33	S		Agree, rural-stronger agreement
98	46	20	47	18	NS		Agree
99	64	8	66	7		U	Agree
100	71	7	78	4	S		Strongly agree, urban-stronger agreement

Total number opinion statements		78
Significant difference in sub-group		34
	rural 24	
	urban 13	
		44

Significant difference between rural and urban	19
No significant difference between rural and urban	25
	44

A total of nineteen items (with no significant differences within rural and urban sub-groups) distinguished significantly between rural and urban youth.

APPENDIX B:

Adult Survey

with

Summary of Results

Attitude Survey
(Adult Form: To be used by any post-high school adults in the home).

This survey is intended to compare the attitudes of rural youth with those of rural adults about change in American society and education. It is not a survey of change as such but is rather a survey of your feelings and attitudes about change.

The study is sponsored by Phi Delta Kappa, a professional educational fraternity, and is conducted by Dr. Elyot W. Johnson, Associate Professor of Teacher Education, California State University, Chico.

The following statements have no "right" or "wrong" responses. The survey is intended to obtain your personal opinion. Your response will be anonymous and your full and thoughtful responses will be appreciated.

Please write only on the response sheet by marking each response firmly with the pencil you have been provided. Please do not write on the survey instrument since it will be used again. You may erase, completely, and mark a different response.

Please do not write anything on the right hand side of the response sheet -- headed by "Your Last Name." Do not use your name.

If at all possible complete the response sheet this evening and return to school tomorrow (or as soon as possible).

I will deeply appreciate your cooperation in this study. Thank you.

1. Age: (A.) 29 or younger (B.) 30-39 (C.) 40-49 (D.) 50-59 (E.) 60 or older
2. Sex: (A.) Male (B.) Female
3. Race: (A.) Caucasian (B.) Mexican-American (C.) Black (D.) Oriental (E.) Indian
4. Religion: (A.) Catholic (B.) Protestant (C.) Jewish (D.) other (E.) none
5. Marital Status: (A.) Married (B.) Widowed (C.) Separated or divorced
6. Occupation: (Write in the occupation after "Institution" at top of response sheet.)
7. Annual Income: (A.) Less than 10,000 (B.) 10,000-15,000 (C.) 15,000-20,000 (D.) 20,000-30,000 (E.) More than 30,000
8. Level of Education: (A.) Did not complete high school (B.) High school graduate (C.) One or more years of college (D.) College graduate (E.) Post-graduate work
9. My length of time in present community: (A.) one year or less (B.) 2-5 years (C.) 6-10 years (D.) 11-20 years (E.) more than 20 years
10. Home: (A.) Town (B.) Farm (C.) House in country
11. Size of farm in acres: (A.) Less than 10 acres (B.) 11-50 (C.) 51-100 (D.) 101-500 (E.) Over 500 acres

(There are no questions #12-#22; proceed to #23 on next page).

ATTITUDE SURVEY: PERCENTAGES OF RURAL ADULT AND YOUTH RESPONSES

Strongly Agree / Strongly Disagree
+Agree +Disagree

S=Significant Difference
Y,A=Significant Difference in Youth, Adult Sub-Group
NS=No Significant Difference

Question	Youth		Adult		Difference		Summary
23	84% /	4%	80% /	16%		Y	Strongly Agree
24	20	56	27	62	S		Disagree
25	76	6	85	10	S		Strongly Agree
26	27	23	35	48	S		Uncertain, divided opinion
27	49	12	87	7	S		Agree
28	54	26	71	24	S		Agree
29	58	14	70	15	S		Agree
30	51	25	67	25	S		Agree
31	37	27	71	21	S		Divided opinion
32	56	20	49	42	S		Agree, adult divided opinion
33	26	58	19	76	S		Disagree
34	38	36	77	16	S		Divided opinion
35	46	27	40	49	S		Agree, adult divided opinion
36	41	16	64	21	S		Agree
37	38	35	76	20	S		Divided opinion
38	28	48	26	68		Y	Disagree
39	75	16	83	16		Y	Strongly Agree
40	73	12	83	10	S		Strongly Agree
41	72	37	89	9		Y	Strongly Agree
42	77	11	87	11	S		Strongly Agree
43	66	21	72	23	S		Agree
44	41	20	83	19		Y	Agree
45	15	54	11	85	S		Disagree
46	19	60	23	64		Y	Disagree
47	23	55	23	61		Y	Disagree
48	66	10	82	7		Y	Agree
49	71	27	89	9	S		Strongly Agree
50	54	14	71	17	S		Agree
51	57	15	63	19	S		Agree
52	42	20	32	33	S		Agree, adult divided opinion
53	47	29	46	44		Y,A	Agree, adult divided opinion
54	41	33	55	36		Y	Agree
55	66	11	72	16	S		Agree
56	39	14	75	13	S		Agree
57	76	7	92	3	S		Strongly Agree
58	49	29	65	26	S		Agree
59	73	8	87	10		Y	Strongly Agree
60	67	8	82	9		Y	Agree
61	49	12	62	20	S		Agree
62	59	22	65	25		Y	Agree
63	47	29	71	16		Y,A	Agree
64	15	77	7	90	S		Strongly diasgree
65	23	36	12	76	S		Uncertain, divided opinion

Question	Youth		Adult		Difference		Summary
66	34%	36%	22%	66%	S		Divided opinion
67	40	31	27	63	S		Youth agree, adults disagree
68	26	40	35	44	S		Disagree, adult divided opinion
69	49	19	62	24	S		Agree
70	36	27	43	47	S		Divided opinion
71	42	32	30	61		Y	Youth agree, adults disagree
72	59	12	50	28		Y	Agree
73	30	57	32	67	S		Disagree
74	33	32	26	67		Y	Divided opinion
75	43	18	42	42	S		Youth agree, adults divided opinion
76	34	28	47	39	S		Divided opinion
77	75	10	95	4		Y	Strongly agree
78	38	32	34	55		Y	Divided opinion
79	43	35	27	65	S		Youth agree, adults disagree
80	62	16	27	67		Y	Youth agree, adults disagree
81	68	18	87	17	S		Strongly agree
82	35	15	74	17	S		Uncertain
83	59	8	59	21	S		Agree
84	32	44	31	47	S		Disagree
85	68	16	71	23	S		Strongly agree
86	21	39	55	31		Y	Youth disagree, adults agree
87	44	38	28	65		Y	Youth agree, adults disagree
88	37	25	27	45	S		Divided opinion
89	47	17	36	41	S		Youth agree, adults disagree
90	83	6	61	24	S		Strongly agree
91	39	25	45	33	S		Agree
92	55	15	76	12	S		Agree
93	48	17	61	19	S		Agree
94	34	32	50	24	S		Divided opinion
95	62	15	47	42	S		Agree, adult divided opinion
96	45	31	56	36		Y	Agree
97	51	28	68	23	S		Agree
98	47	21	19	65	S		Youth agree, adults disagree
99	65	8	74	17	S		Strongly agree
100	71	7	86	6	S		Strongly agree

Total number opinion statements		78
Significant difference in sub-group		23
	rural youth 23	
	rural adult 2	
		55

Significant difference between youth and adult	55
No significant difference between youth and adult	0
	55

A total of fifty-five items (with no significant differences within youth and adult sub-groups) distinguished significantly between rural youth and rural adults.

Rural adults tend to have more firm opinions, significantly less "no opinion," than rural youth. The significant differences in responses between rural adults and rural youth is generally explained, not by differing views, but by more pronounced adult opinion.

APPENDIX C:

Interview Questions

Structured Interview
(From a random selection; 30 minutes in length; taped and transcribed)

Typical questions:

1. What do you believe are the values of a rural way of life in contrast to life in a city?
2. What do you believe are the problems, limitations of a rural life in contrast to those of a city?
3. In what ways do you perceive rural life changing in America? Do you approve, disapprove of these changes?
4. How is your school changing? How would you like it to change?
5. What changes do you perceive taking place in the school curriculum? How would you like the curriculum to change?
6. Do you perceive change in your teachers? How would you like your teachers to change?
7. Is your education preparing you to cope with rapid social change?
8. How do you feel about change in your school and in your community?
9. Do you expect more/less change in the future?
10. How do you perceive your own life affected by change?